

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 5 1. A method for validating information in an electronic document, comprising:
 - identifying a string having a unique identifier associated with the string;
 - creating a request for information requesting information associated with the unique identifier;
 - selecting a reference material source that contains the information associated with the unique identifier;
 - accessing the selected reference material source to obtain the information associated with the unique identifier; and
- 10 15 comparing the information associated with the unique identifier to the string to determine whether the string is valid.
- 20 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein comparing the information associated with the unique identifier to the string to determine whether the string is valid, comprises:
 - if the information associated with the unique identifier matches the string, then determining that the string is valid; and
- 25 otherwise, determining that the information associated with the unique identifier updates the string.
- 30 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein identifying a string having a unique identifier associated with the string comprises:
 - searching the electronic document for strings having unique identifiers when the electronic document is opened.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the string is a name and the selected reference material source is an address book.
 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the string is an address and the selected reference material source is an address book.
 10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the string is a value associated with a stock symbol and the selected reference material source is a real time stock quote.

7. A method for providing reference material, comprising:

receiving a request for selected reference material;

5 determining that an identity of a user is relevant to the selected reference material;

creating a request for information requesting the selected reference material and identifying the user;

selecting a reference material source based upon 10 the request for information;

accessing the selected reference material source to obtain the selected reference material; and

providing the selected reference material in a manner that is relevant to the identified user.

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8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the selected reference material is a set of directions and wherein providing the selected reference material comprises:

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providing the set of directions so that the directions begin with the identified user's location.

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9. The method of Claim 7, wherein the selected reference material source is one of a plurality of reference material sources, and at least one of the reference material sources is a remote server.

10. The method of Claim 7, wherein the selected reference material source is accessed via a network.

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11. A system for integrating reference material into an electronic document, comprising:
- 5 an application program for creating the electronic document and creating a request for information to obtain selected reference material;
- 10 a reference engine for receiving the request for information from the application program, selecting one of a plurality of reference material sources based upon the request for information, and accessing the selected reference material source to obtain the selected reference material; and
- 15 the plurality of reference material sources for providing reference material.
12. The system of Claim 11, wherein the electronic document includes a string having a unique identifier associated with the string, and wherein the request for information comprises the unique identifier.
- 20 13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the application program compares the selected reference material with the string to determine whether the string is valid.
- 25 14. The system of Claim 11, wherein a user's identity is relevant to the request for information, and wherein the request for information comprises an identifier for the user.
- 30 15. The system of Claim 11, wherein the request for information includes a selected word and a request for a definition of the word.
16. The system of Claim 11, wherein the application program is a word processing program having a

selected language, and wherein the request for information comprises an identifier for the selected language.

5 17. The system of Claim 11, wherein one of the plurality of reference material sources is a dictionary in a first language and another one of the plurality of reference material sources is a dictionary in a second language.

10 18. The system of Claim 11, wherein one of the plurality of reference material sources is an address book associated with an electronic mail application program.

15 19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the request for information comprises a unique identifier associated with an entry in the address book, and wherein the reference engine selects the address book as the selected reference material source based upon the unique identifier.

20 20. The system of Claim 11, wherein the request for information comprises key words summarizing the content of the electronic document.

25 21. The system of Claim 11, wherein one of the plurality of reference material sources is a remote server.

22. The system of Claim 11, wherein one of the plurality of reference material sources is accessed via a network.

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23. A method for integrating a dictionary into an application program, comprising:

- 5 in response to a selection of a dictionary control provided by the application program, displaying a dictionary interface on a display device;
- 10 receiving a request for a selected word; creating a request for a definition of the selected word;
- 15 based upon the request for a definition, selecting a dictionary file; accessing the dictionary file to obtain the definition of the selected word; and providing the definition of the selected word so that the definition is displayed in the dictionary interface.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein receiving a request for a selected word comprises:

- 20 receiving the selected word via the dictionary interface.

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein the dictionary interface includes a language control and wherein receiving a request for a selected word comprises:

- 25 receiving a selected language via the dictionary interface.

26. The method of Claim 23, wherein the dictionary interface includes a language control and wherein selecting a dictionary file comprises:

- 30 selecting a dictionary file associated with a language specified by the language control.